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March 19, 1956

PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1956

F L O R I D A

In a recent survey Florida farmers indicated a slight reduction in the combine planted acreage of field crops (excluding cotton) this year. Indications totaled 1,186,600 acres for corn, oats, hay, potatoes, sweet potatoes, soybeans, tobacco and peanuts. This will be a one percent reduction from last year, but one percent more than the 1945-54 average. Increases were reported for soybeans, shade-grown tobacco, hay, potatoes and oats over last year. These were offset by reductions in the intended acreage of peanuts, flue-cured tobacco, sweet potatoes and corn. Notable increases were in soybeans and potatoes, which were both up 10 percent from the previous year. The sharpest reduction is expected in allotment program crops, - peanuts down 10 percent and flue-cured tobacco down 12 percent. There is an expected 11 percent reduction of the sweet potato acreage to 8,000 acres and the corn planted acreage is indicated slightly less than last year.

The seeding of spring crops is on schedule in most areas, with light to moderate rainfall in northern counties. Planting of field corn is underway and land is being prepared for cotton. Tobacco beds are in good shape and plants are nearly ready for transplanting.

PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR FLORIDA - 1956

C R O P	P L A N T E D A C R E A G E S					
	Acreage	Yield per		Indicated	1956 as	
	1945-54	Planted Acre	1955	1956	Percent	
	Average	1945-54			of 1955	
	(000)			T h o u s a n d s		Percent
Corn, all	623	13.1 Bu.	599	587		98
Oats	145	4.7 Bu.	188	199		106
Hay, all	102	.65 Ton	112	118		105
Potatoes	30.9	206 Bu.	39.0	43.0		110
Sweet Potatoes	10.7	67 Bu.	9	8		89
Soybeans, <u>2/</u> , <u>3/</u>	16	--	40	44		110
Tobacco, all, <u>1/</u>	24.0	1079 Lb.	25.0	22.6		90
Tobacco, Type <u>14</u> , <u>1/</u>	20.4	1064 Lb.	21.1	18.6		88
Tobacco, Type <u>62</u> , <u>1/</u>	3.6	1166 Lb.	3.9	4.0		103
Peanuts, <u>2/</u>	224	--	183	165		90

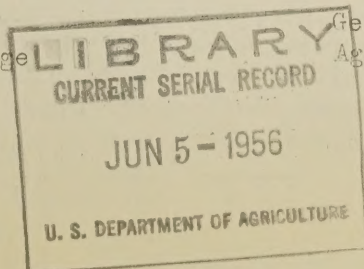
UNITED STATES

Corn, all	84,815	36.3 Bu.	781,577	78,686		96.5
All spring wheat	20,138	--	13,891	14,605		105.1
Durum	2,615	11.5 Bu.	1,424	2,021		141.9
Other spring	17,523	13.9 Bu.	12,467	12,584		100.9
Oats	44,307	30.6 Bu.	48,021	46,063		95.9
Barley	11,713	23.6 Bu.	16,102	14,773		91.7
Flaxseed	4,367	8.7 Bu.	5,192	5,465		105.3
Rice	1,894	2232 Lb.	1,842	1,597		86.7
Sorghums for all purposes	14,383	--	24,113	24,198		100.4
Potatoes	1,858	221.3 Bu.	1,452	1,394		96.0
Sweet Potatoes	466	92.1 Bu.	364	323		88.7
Tobacco <u>1/</u>	1,726	1236 Lb.	1,510	1,366		90.4
Beans, dry edible	1,676	1058 Lb.	1,660	1,535		92.5
Peas, dry field	369	1148 lb.	325	377		116.0
Soybeans, <u>2/</u>	14,290	--	19,669	21,760		110.6
Peanuts <u>2/</u>	2,943	--	2,004	1,923		96.0
Hay, <u>1/</u>	73,836	1.39 Ton	73,984	74,305		100.4
Sugar beets	847	13.2 Ton	798	829		103.8

- 1/ Acreage harvested.
2/ Grown alone for all purposes.
3/ Short-time average.

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UNITED STATES

Grower's March intentions point to a moderate reduction from last year's level in the combined acreage of the Nation's crops. Feed grain acreage may be notably smaller than last year because of important reductions in corn, oats and barley. Spring planted food grains will exceed last year's total because of larger spring wheat plantings, especially of Durum varieties, although rice plantings will be sharply reduced. Large increases in acreage of soybeans and flax are planned.

Changes this year from early prospects for different crops may be somewhat greater than usual after all influences have been reflected. Some allotment programs, notably tobacco and Durum wheat, have already been modified since farmers reported their acreage intentions about March 1. Legislation now being considered by Congress may also result in acreage shifts if adopted before planting is completed. Future weather is also a factor. Winter wheat acreage in much of the Southern Plains may still be lost from drought and wind erosion with varying possibilities for replanting to other crops. The season is somewhat backward over much of the Nation, allowing added time for late decisions. Soil moisture supplies now appear generally favorable with the exception of the Southern Plains and extensive areas in Western Corn Belt States. Western irrigation water prospects are best in years.

Present indications for the 16 crops included in this report point to a total of about 283 million acres for these crops, - 3.4 million acres less than in 1955. Principal reductions from last year, by crops are: Corn 2.9 million acres; Oats 2 million acres; Barley 1.3 million acres; Rice one-fourth million acres. Slight reductions in acreage are also in prospect for potatoes, sweet potatoes, peanuts, dry beans and tobacco. Sharpest reductions on a percentage basis are in view for rice, sweet potatoes, tobacco and dry beans. Increases are expected for soybeans, amounting to 2.1 million acres, spring wheat 0.7 million acres - mostly in Durum wheat, and moderate to slight increases for hay crops, sorghums, dry peas and sugar beets.

The 59 principal crops regularly included in official estimates now seem likely to have a total acreage planted or grown in 1956 of about 352 million acres. This would be the smallest total for these crops since 1942, over 3 million acres less than last year and 5.5 million less than the 10-year average. Moderate decreases are in prospect in about three-fourths of all States. Included in this tentative appraisal for 1956 is the allotted acreage of cotton, the planted winter wheat acreage as estimated last December, and approximations which seem reasonable for other crops not yet covered by survey indications.

Feed grain crops apparently will furnish the major part of the total acreage reduction from the 1955 level. Corn acreage now promises to be the smallest planted since 1926 - earliest year in the series of planted acreage estimates. Corn plantings of 78.7 million acres for 1956 seem remarkably small in comparison with early years. Over 50 years ago nearly 95 million acres of corn were harvested in the Nation annually. However, even from this year's reduced acreage yields at the 5-year average level for each State would give another 3 billion bushel crop. This is as much as had been grown in any year as recently as 1942 after hybrid corn had already become commonplace in the main Corn Belt. Decreases in corn acreage prospects are rather uniform by areas, nationally averaging 3.5 percent below last year. Oats plantings will be cut 2 million acres or about 4 percent below the 1955 record with decreases in all except the Western and North Atlantic regions. Barley acreage will be reduced 1.3 million acres with decreases in nearly all leading States. Sorghum for all purposes seems likely to exceed last year's record acreage because of increases expected in Kansas and Nebraska. Hazards still ahead for Southern Plains winter wheat, however, make a March appraisal of sorghum acreage prospects extremely tentative.

Soybeans stand out this year as the leader in acreage expansion. The 2.1 million acre increase indicated over the 1955 record would bring plantings to a total of 23.8 million acres, giving even greater importance to this comparative newcomer among American crops. Growers in Iowa and Minnesota expect to increase acreage sharply, in contrast with the moderate increases indicated in most other States.